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## **Hong Kong**

### **Market Development Reports**

# **New Requirements for the Importation of Chilled Meats to Hong Kong 2002**

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#### **Report Highlights:**

Effective April 1, 2002, all Hong Kong importers of chilled meat will have to apply to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for an import permit. All consignments will then be subject to visual inspection prior to release for sale in the market. FEHD officials have given assurances that the new procedures will not impede trade, but are being imposed to facilitate trace-back of chilled meat products sold in Hong Kong. Prior to April 1, only ground meat imports required import permits.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Hong Kong [HK1], HK

The Hong Kong government currently recognizes 26 different countries competent authorities in issuing meat export certificates, such as the United States and the People's Republic of China. Generally speaking, if an import consignment for meat and poultry products is accompanied by a certificate issued by a recognized competent authority, it can be imported to Hong Kong without any permit issued by the Hong Kong government. Ground meat imports, which require an import certificate issued by the Hong Kong government regardless of country-of-origin, are a notable exception to this general practice.

Effective April 1, 2002, the importation of all chilled meats will also require an import permit. The rationale for the change is to allow Hong Kong government officials a better system for trace-back and to allow closer monitoring of increasing imports of chilled meats into Hong Kong from China and other Asian suppliers.

According to officials in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), it will take about 5 working days for a Hong Kong importer to apply for and receive an import permit. The application can be processed before the arrival of the consignment in Hong Kong. However, all consignments of chilled meats will have to be inspected by FEHD inspectors before the products can be released. For consignments arriving at the air terminal, they can be released immediately because FEHD has facilities at the airport to carry out on-site inspection. Consequently, chilled products arriving by air should not be delayed owing to inspection procedure.

However, consignments arriving by sea and/or by truck could encounter delays given the need for the importer to schedule an on-site inspection at their warehouses given that FEHD does not have facilities at port unloading facilities and cross-border entry points with China. Some traders are concerned that this new requirement may force them to bring in chilled meats by air instead of by sea because the shelf-life of chilled meats may not be long enough to allow time for inspection, if it takes place weeks after the goods arrive in Hong Kong. Currently, traders may have to wait two to three weeks for FEHD's inspectors to inspect frozen goods and sign the Release Letter.

FEHD officials have given assurances that this new requirement will not impact trade and that chilled meats will be given priority on their inspection lists. The representative agreed to set up a "Special Communication Link" by which importers are able to liaise with FEHD and fix inspection appointments prior to consignment arrivals. Moreover, FEHD officials have indicated that inspection will be carried out within 3 working days after notification by importers of the arrival of the product at the warehouse. Importers generally view that this 3-working day provision will work and should not unduly affect trade.

Hong Kong imported roughly \$74 million in chilled beef, pork and poultry in 2001, primarily in the form of chilled pork from Thailand (\$25 million) and chilled poultry (\$29 million) from China. U.S. exports of chilled meat are primarily in the form of high quality beef, approximately \$5 million, with modest amounts of chilled pork (\$150,000) and chilled poultry (\$190,000). ATO Hong Kong, in cooperation with local U.S. Meat Export Federation and USA Poultry and Egg Export Council offices, will monitor the situation in the coming months as the new procedures are implemented to assure that they do not negatively impact on U.S. exports of chilled meat and poultry to Hong Kong.

Table 1 : Hong Kong's Total Import of Beef

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change - 01/00 -
	2000	2001	2000	2001	
--The World--	170	147	100	100	-13.54
United States	63	48	37.13	32.64	-24.01
China	29	29	16.81	19.62	0.91
Brazil	28	27	16.73	18.04	-6.79
New Zealand	19	16	11.32	10.91	-16.72
Australia	14	13	8.41	8.72	-10.36
Argentina	3	4	1.65	2.62	37.08
Canada	5	3	2.67	1.77	-42.71
Japan	3	3	2.06	1.73	-27.38

Table 2 : Hong Kong's Total Import of Chilled Beef

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change - 01/00 -
	2000	2001	2000	2001	
--The World--	21	18	100	100	-14.85
Australia	8	7	36.34	40.10	-6.03
United States	6	5	28.37	27.98	-16.03
New Zealand	5	4	23.25	23.86	-12.64

Table 3 : Hong Kong's Total Import of Pork

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change - 01/00 -
	2000	2001	2000	2001	
--The World--	306	331	100	100	8.17
China	130	146	42.57	44.10	12.06
Brazil	68	63	22.16	19.19	-6.31
Thailand	22	29	7.18	8.66	30.52
Vietnam	14	21	4.44	6.41	56.10
Netherlands	20	14	6.54	4.36	-27.91
United States	13	14	4.35	4.26	6.14

Table 4 : Hong Kong's Import of Chilled Pork

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change - 01/00 -
	2000	2001	2000	2001	
--The World	20.66	25.65	100	100	24.12
Thailand	18.07	24.49	87.47	95.50	35.53
Australia	2.01	0.94	9.71	3.65	-53.29
United States	0.16	0.15	0.76	0.58	-4.57
China	0.18	0.05	0.89	0.20	-72.58

Table 5 : Hong Kong's Import of Poultry

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change
	2000	2001	2000	2001	- 01/00 -
--The World--	860	787	100	100	-8.51
United States	483	424	56.17	53.89	-12.22
Brazil	107	107	12.42	13.57	-0.01
China	89	98	10.35	12.47	10.26
Thailand	26	28	3.04	3.58	7.82
United Kingdom	29	22	3.37	2.86	-22.34
France	18	17	2.07	2.18	-3.25
Netherlands	25	17	2.96	2.14	-33.95

Table 6 : Hong Kong's Import of Chilled Poultry

Country	Millions of US Dollars		% Share		% Change
	2000	2001	2000	2001	- 01/00 -
--The World--	33.75	29.95	100	100	-11.24
China	32.59	28.92	96.57	96.55	-11.25
France	0.61	0.74	1.81	2.47	20.89
United States	0.50	0.19	1.48	0.63	-62.38
Brazil	0.02	0.05	0.07	0.18	127.27
Australia	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.08	120.99